



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE CR
MONDAY, JUNE 22, 1998
(202) 616-2777
TDD (202) 514-1888

**FEDERAL COURT APPROVES SETTLEMENT THAT WILL RELEASE
THE INDIANAPOLIS SCHOOL SYSTEM FROM COURT SUPERVISION**

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- The Justice Department, seven Indiana school districts and Indiana state officials today filed a settlement that will terminate a court desegregation order that requires Indianapolis to transfer city students to six suburban school districts.

The settlement, filed in U.S. District Court in Indianapolis, permits the Indianapolis Public Schools (IPS) to phase out its practice of transferring students to suburban schools that have a low minority population. Under the phase out, students in Marion County, which includes the suburbs around Indianapolis, will not have to change schools which they have already started attending.

Suburban school districts that have a minority population of more than 20 percent will stop receiving new students from IPS in the fall of 1999. School districts, if any, which have a minority population less than 20 percent will begin the phase out in 2004. The phase out will be complete when the last entering student graduates.

In 1969, a federal court found that the state had contributed to the segregation of IPS by creating a unified governing structure for Marion county, which encompassed all public services except education. In addition, the court found that all public housing had been placed within the confines of IPS, thereby leading to the segregation of minority residents in the city's school system.

The court ordered IPS to begin transferring students to six suburban school districts--a so-called inter-district remedy. IPS began the transfers in 1981, following a decade of appeals.

Today's agreements phases out the inter-district remedies established by the court order.

In a related, but separate, agreement, the Indianapolis Housing Agency agreed to take steps to expand affordable housing opportunities throughout Marion County. The steps, taken with the assistance of the state, will ensure continued progress in efforts to integrate both education and housing throughout the county.

"This is a unique remedy for a unique school desegregation case," said Bill Lann Lee, Acting Assistant Attorney General for Civil Rights. "By requiring that steps be taken to further integrate the surrounding suburbs, this agreement will help to achieve diversity in schools and communities throughout Marion County."

The state has agreed to provide funding for educational support during the transition period.

In a hearing today, the court approved the agreement phasing out the inter-district remedies. It also found IPS has complied with the court's earlier orders concerning the operation of schools within Indianapolis and released IPS from court supervision.

There are approximately 350 school desegregation cases in which the Justice department is a party. Of the 350 in which the Justice Department is a party, only one other involves inter-district remedies.

###